

### **Specification Amendments**

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

A switching system includes a backplane having slots, each including a first set of connectors designed according to a common specification. The slots include at least one extended slot and at least two normal slots, each normal slot including the first set of connectors, each extended slot including the first set of connectors and an additional second set of connectors. The backplane has signal lines to ~~connect the connectors of the extended and normal slots to support at least one data channel between the first set of connectors of each of one or more of the at least one extended slot and the first set of connectors of each of one or more of the at least two normal slots~~ support a data channel between first set of connectors of the normal slot and the extended slot. The backplane also has signal lines to ~~connect the connectors of the extended and normal slots to support at least one data channel between the second set of connectors of each of one or more of the at least one extended slot and the first set of connectors of each of one or more of the at least two normal slots~~ support a data channel between first set of connectors of the normal slot and the second set of connectors of the extended slot.